

THE ANCIENT PIEDMONT ROUTE OF NORTHERN MESO-POTAMIA.

By ELLEN C. SEMPLE.

[Presented at the Baltimore meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Dec. 28, 1918.]

(Abstract.)

Climate played an important part in making the ancient piedmont route of northern Mesopotamia the principal one between the Orient and the Mediterranean. The Red Sea route, geographically attractive, was relatively little used because of the strong northwest winds which blew in the upper part as if in a funnel between the high-confining walls of the Anatolian and Lybian Plateaus. The northern Mesopotamian route, topographically easy and direct, had, besides, a favorable climate. The winter snows on the mountains yielded water slowly enough to make the small amount of average precipitation (10 inches) sufficient to irrigate valley lands and thus to support a series of disconnected settlements on the piedmont. It was through these towns that the ancient commerce moved; and it is through these towns on the same sites that the present Bagdad Railroad passes.—*C. F. B.*

PAST AND PRESENT CLIMATES OF OUR LEADING CROP PLANTS.

By H. C. COWLES.

[Presented at the Baltimore meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Dec. 27, 1918.]

(Abstract.)

Most crop plants have originated in what are now tropical or subtropical regions; tropical America, Malaysia, and the Levant. The potato alone of the major crops came from a cool region. Many of the crops are now grown only outside the Tropics, while others are still raised in their original zone. It is generally agreed that mutation, or perhaps acclimatization, rather than change of climate, is responsible for the change of habitat of most of our crop plants, while the rest have not moved. An interesting phase of plant origin is that for many the place of origin is by far not the best habitat for that plant. A cold-resistant plant is as likely to originate (though not as likely to survive) in a warm as in a cold region.—*C. F. B.*